



Maria Sachs

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There is a “new kid on the block” in the form of Florida Atlantic University's (FAU) Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine. Although FAU's medical school was founded just five years ago, it is now a major competitor of both UM and NSU in the South Florida area.

It was not until April of 2015 that FAU's medical school yielded its first group of graduates from its inaugural class, totalling 53 new doctors. Even still, in the early part of that same year, FAU's medical school saw a 35% jump in general applicants for 64 positions. It also witnessed a 22% increase in applicants for 36 spots with respect to the second year of FAU's internal medicine residency program, which was initiated in 2014 with Boca Raton Regional Hospital, Delray Medical Center and Bethesda Hospital East in Boynton Beach.

In light of its early success, FAU's medical school now intends to create additional residency programs within the next several years, including programs in general surgery, emergency medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics and psychiatry. In addition to the hospitals that FAU's medical school is presently collaborating with, it has also entered into agreements with West Boca Raton Regional and St. Mary's Hospital in West Palm Beach to develop even more medical education programs. Moreover, FAU's medical school has additionally partnered with Scripps Florida and the Max Planck Society to conduct joint medical and scientific research.

The rapid development and continuing improvement of FAU's medical school could not have come at a more opportune time given the significant lack of medical professionals that Florida, including the Broward and Palm Beach County areas, could very well be facing in the not-too-distant future.

A recent Florida State University study predicts that there will be a severe shortage of doctors throughout our state within the next decade. Based on a separate report from the Teaching Hospital Council of Florida and the Safety Net Alliance of Florida, this shortage will grow to 7,000 specially-trained physicians by 2025. According to another analysis from the Florida Department of Health, a serious deficit already exists in the number of primary care doctors in much of Florida; in fact, 16 counties contain less than seven active primary care physicians for every 10,000 residents, compared to 22 active primary care physicians per 10,000 citizens found in the United States overall.

To make matters worse, Florida ranks 42nd out of 50 when compared to

other states in terms of its ratio of medical residencies to population size, with 19 physicians-in-training per 100,000 residents. This means that our state would need to create and fill about 13,500 medical residency positions to fully resolve the projected doctor shortage by 2025, which would equate to around 1,360 new residency positions per year over the next 10 years.

Consequently, due to the glaring shortfall in the number of available residency programs, many physicians graduating from medical schools in Florida ultimately leave our state to complete their medical training elsewhere.

In order to counteract this troubling situation in the South Florida area, I have introduced Senate Bill 878, which will be heard in session on the 24th of February for a final vote. My measure calls for adding the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine at FAU to the list of Florida medical schools that are eligible to receive medical faculty certifications.

If my bill passes, FAU's medical faculty members will be rightfully recognized for their expertise, reputation and professionalism in the practice of medicine. At the same time, both the amount and system of residency programs at FAU's medical school would be significantly enhanced over time, paving the way for the promotion and retention of more local doctors, a vital asset that our community so desperately needs.

If you would like to learn more about the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine at FAU here is a link: <http://med.fau.edu/> #FAUMedSchool #Florida #FAU



FAU - College of Medicine - The Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine

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